

Item No. 24

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/12/01510/FULL
LOCATION	2 - 6 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JA
PROPOSAL	Part demolition rear outbuilding, reconstruction of outbuilding including pitched roof, construction of external staircase within courtyard, change of use to part first floor and ground floor to holistic health centre, change of use part ground floor from residential to commercial cafe kitchen use, change of use from hairdressing salon to hot food cafe and refurbishment various elements of building
PARISH	Biggleswade
WARD	Biggleswade North
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Jones & Mrs Lawrence
CASE OFFICER	Nikolas Smith
DATE REGISTERED	25 April 2012
EXPIRY DATE	20 June 2012
APPLICANT	Ms Kenny
AGENT	Triad Planning & Design Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	The corresponding application for Listed Building Consent was called to Committee by Cllr J Lawrence because of the sites location, heritage status and because of local interest
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Granted

Site Location:

A two-storey (with some use of the basement and roof space), Grade II listed building on the junction of St Andrew's Street/Shortmead Street and High Street and within the Biggleswade Conservation Area. The building is arranged around a central courtyard with a single-storey series of outbuildings on the western boundary of the site. To the north is St. Andrew's church, a Grade II* listed building that is set back from the highway with extensive grounds including the land immediately to the west of the site. To the south is a car park serving a Conservative Club and there are trees within that curtilage near to the application site.

The building is, in parts, in a poor state of repair. A hair dressing salon is operating from the northern section of the building but much of the ground floor is vacant retail space. Part of the ground floor and the first floor is in residential use (there are three independent units totalling seven bedrooms), only some of which is occupied. The single storey outbuildings at the rear of the site are used as storage/workshops but again, are not occupied.

The site is within the town centre, which is served by public parking and public transport links.

The Application:

Planning permission is sought for:

- the repair and remodelling of the existing outbuildings and the replacement of the existing flat roof with a pitched roof;
- the creation of an external staircase within the central courtyard;
- landscaping and a bin store within the central courtyard;
- the replacement of one window on the front elevation; and
- the change of use of the ground floor from part retail and part residential to café and holistic health centre and the change of use of the first floor from residential to part holistic health centre and part residential.

Because it is not clear whether the existing hair salon use will continue to operate from the site, and if so, for how long, an alternative proposed ground floor plan has been submitted showing the salon in its current location. As a result, this plan shows a different ground floor arrangement. This alternative plan has been accepted alongside the initially proposed ground floor plan because the issues raised and the assessment of the proposals would be the same. There would be no changes to the external appearance of the building. If approved, the applicant would be able to decide which floor plan they wanted to implement.

Relevant Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

- 2. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- 11. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (CSDMP) (2009)

- DM3 High Quality Development
- DM7 Development in Town Centres
- DM13 Heritage in Development

Design in Central Bedfordshire (a Guide for Development) (DCB) (2010)

- DS3 Town Centre and Infill Development
- DS5 The Historic Environment

Planning History:

There is no relevant, recent planning history at the site.

Representations:

Town Council

Biggleswade Town Council objected to the application for Listed Building Consent. But where matters raised relate are planning issues, rather than heritage issues, they are outlined below and addressed in this report.

- Traffic and Parking
- Amount of footfall
- Change of use of the building
- Size of the project
- Inappropriate next to St Andrew's Church
- Hot food will need an extraction system

Neighbours

Press and site notices were displayed and one response was received, commenting as follows:

- Criticising this application for a lack of on-site parking would prohibit any commercial use at the site.

Consultee responses:

Highways	No objection.
Conservation Officer	No objection. The works would improve the building.
Archaeologist	No objection subject to a condition
Public Protection	No objection
Highways Agency	No objection
English Heritage	No objection

Determining Issues:

The considerations in the determination of this application are:

1. Principle of the development
2. The appearance of the site and heritage implications
3. Traffic, parking and waste and recycling
4. Neighbours and living conditions

Considerations:

1. Principle of the development

The NPPF (2012) states that local planning authorities should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and support their viability and vitality

and that they should promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice. It also recognises the role of residential uses in supporting successful town centres.

Policy DM7 (Development in Town Centres) of CSDMP (2009) states that there is a need to ensure that a balance of uses comes forward in town centres to serve local residents and provide employment opportunities and that food and drink facilities within town centres are an important component of local life. The Council will look to retain retail uses (A1-A5) at ground floor level in town centres.

Whilst overall, the development would result in a net loss of retail floor space (use classes A1-A5), that loss would be modest (around 20m²) and should be considered in the context that much of the existing floor space is currently vacant.

Whilst not a retail use, the holistic health centre would have similar characteristics to one in terms of the numbers of likely visitors and hours of use.

Both uses would be appropriate in this town centre context and significantly, the applicant anticipates that the number of jobs created by the site would increase from three to 27 as a result of the development. Creating employment is a significant objective of the NPPF and the increase that would result from this development would be relatively significant. Further, the uses would allow for the full occupation of the building where it is currently largely vacant. This would contribute towards the vitality and viability of the shopping area in general, would help to increase the number of visitors to the High Street and is supported in general policy objectives.

The number of residential units at the site would remain the same (three) but the total number of bedrooms would decrease from seven to four. Given that they would be replaced by employment generating uses in a town centre, that would be acceptable.

National and local policies support commercial uses in town centres, particularly where they would create jobs and would utilise currently vacant floor space. As a result, the development would be acceptable in principle.

2. The appearance of the site and heritage implications

The NPPF (2012) states that in determining applications with heritage implications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation and heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Policy DM13 (Heritage in Development) of the CSDMP (2009) states that particular attention should be paid to locally distinctive features and uses and

that development within Conservation Area should be appropriate.

Policy DM3 (High Quality Development) of the CSDMP (2009) states that new development should contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness through design and use of materials.

Parts of the building are in a poor state of repair and its general renovation would be supported. The removal of modern additions, like the glazed porch facing the courtyard would also be welcomed.

The replacement of a window on the front elevation (at the eastern end of the building) would cause no harm to its character, would improve the commercial function of the building through provision of a shop window and would be acceptable.

The outbuildings at the rear of the site are in a poor state of repair and are much less attractive than other parts of the buildings. It has a flat, asbestos roof. The proposed replacement roof would sit much more comfortably against the pitched roofs found elsewhere in the building and would improve the appearance of the site overall.

The introduction of an external staircase would represent a transient feature that could be removed with ease and little disruption in the future if necessary.

Additional landscaping within the central courtyard would improve the appearance of the site.

A condition would require the submission of a written scheme of archaeological investigation because of the sensitivity of the site and this would ensure that no harm would be caused to local heritage assets.

The proposal does not include signage or advertising and the necessary consents will need to be sought and obtained before any is displayed.

The development would be sensitive and would benefit the listed building through necessary repair and restoration and would cause no harm to its special architectural or historic character. No harm would be caused to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the appearance of the building or the street scene.

3. Traffic, parking and waste and recycling

Policy DM3 (High Quality Development) of the CSDMP (2009) states that new development should comply with guidance on waste management and provide adequate areas for parking and servicing.

There is currently no parking provided at the site and none would be provided to accompany this development. It is not likely that there would be a notable difference in visitor numbers between the existing uses at the site if they were fully occupied and the proposed uses.

There is nearby public parking and there are public transport links serving the town centre. National policy objectives promote sustainable modes of travel and

the provision of on-site parking would discourage the use of local public transport services.

In the context of the location and the character of the uses proposed, it would not be necessary or appropriate to provide off-street car parking and the lack of provision is acceptable here.

The storage of waste and recycling within the central courtyard would be acceptable.

In the context of the location and the proposed uses, no harm would be caused to traffic safety or the local parking situation.

4. Neighbours and living conditions

Policy DM3 (High Quality Development) of the CSDMP (2009) states that new development should respect the amenity of surrounding properties.

Neither of the adjoining neighbours are in a residential use. The grounds serving the church to the north are relatively vast and the increase in height of the replacement roof to the existing outbuildings at the north of the site would cause no harm to the use or enjoyment of that space. Extraction from the café kitchen would be directed towards the courtyard and not the church so noise or cooking smells would not cause harms to users of the church.

There are trees on the southern boundary of the site within the curtilage of the Conservative Club and protected by the Conservation Area. These applications do not propose works to those trees and consent should be sought before any work is carried out, if it is intended that it will be.

The site would contain three independent residential units (as it does now) and they would be in close proximity to the proposed uses that would operate from the building. However, the relatively discreet nature of the uses when taken together with a condition controlling hours of operation to sociable hours, would ensure that no harm would be caused to future occupiers through noise and disturbance associated with the health centre or the café.

All of the rooms within the flats would receive good light and outlook. The arrangements would be unorthodox but that would be a consequence of the and layout of the building and would be acceptable in that context.

No harm would be caused to neighbouring buildings and the quality of the living accommodation provided within the site would be acceptable.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 No extraction vents shall be installed in to any external wall unless otherwise agreed in writing beforehand by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the appearance of the site and to control noise and odours.

- 3 The bin storage area shown on drawing number 12-752-P-05 shall be provided before the commencement of the A3 use at the site and shall be permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that waste and recycling is properly stored and collected.

- 4 The uses hereby approved shall not operate except between the hours of 0730 to 2100 on Mondays to Saturdays and 0830 to 1800 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring buildings and uses.

- 5 No development shall take place until the applicant or developer has secured the implementation of a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The said development shall only be implemented in accordance with the scheme thereby approved.

Reason: To record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage assets with archaeological interest in accordance with Policy 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*.

- 7 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers [12-752-P-01, 02, 03, 04, 15, 06, 07 and 12-752-BR-10].

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Reason for approval:

The development would cause no harm to the appearance of the site or to the special architectural or historic character of the listed building, would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, would cause no harm to living conditions at neighbouring buildings and would not result in harm to highway safety. Further, the uses would promote the continued use of the building and would be appropriate in this town centre location. The development would be in accordance with the objectives of the National

Planning Policy Framework (2012), Policies DM3 (High Quality Development), DM7 (Development in Town Centres) and DM13 (Heritage in Development) of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and Design Supplements 3 (Town Centre and Infill Development) and 5 (the Historic Environment) of Design in Central Bedfordshire (a Guide to Development) (2010).

DECISION

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